



## TUBERCULOSIS INFORMATION

### - BCG Vaccine

BCG, or bacille Calmette-Guérin, is a vaccine for tuberculosis (TB) disease. BCG is used in many countries, but it is not used widely in the United States for two reasons. First, some studies have shown that BCG is effective in preventing TB, but others have not. In eight major studies, BCG vaccine has varied in effectiveness from 0% to 76%. Second, because BCG immunization may cause a positive reaction to the tuberculin skin test, it may complicate decisions about giving preventive therapy to BCG-vaccinated persons who have a positive skin test result.

BCG vaccination does appear to lower the risk of serious complications of primary TB in children. But in the United States, the consideration of BCG vaccination is recommended only for children who have negative tuberculin skin test results and who (1) cannot be given isoniazid preventive therapy but are at high risk for continuous exposure to persons with infectious TB, (2) will be continuously exposed to TB that is resistant to isoniazid and rifampin, or (3) are in population groups for which the rate of new infection exceeds 1% per year. BCG is no longer recommended for health care workers or other adults who are likely to be exposed to TB. Furthermore, BCG should not be given to persons who are immunosuppressed, such as persons who are infected with HIV. It should not be given to pregnant women, even though no harmful effects of BCG vaccination on the fetus have been observed.

#### Interpreting Tuberculin Skin Test Results in BCG-Vaccinated Persons

In persons who have been vaccinated with BCG, it is impossible to determine whether a positive tuberculin skin test reaction is caused by immunization with BCG or by infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

However, the probability that a positive reaction is caused by infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* increases (1) as the size of the reaction increases, (2) as the length of time between vaccination and skin testing increases, (3) when the patient has been in contact with someone who has infectious TB disease, (4) when there is a family history of TB, or (5) when the patient is from a country where TB is common.

BCG-vaccinated persons who have a positive reaction to the tuberculin skin test but who do not have TB disease should be evaluated for preventive therapy. The possibility of TB disease should be considered for BCG-vaccinated persons who have symptoms suggestive of TB.

For information about implementing CDC guidelines, call your state health department.



## PUBLIC COMMENT - TUBERCULOSIS FAX SYSTEM

For a limited time CDC is accepting public comment on the information services you used. We are particularly interested in the areas listed below. If you wish to comment, you may:

**FAX this sheet with your comments to: CDC-VIS/FAX (404) 639-1733, or**

Mail to: CDC, IRMO MS C-15, 1600 Clifton Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30333

1. You are

- ☐ health care professional  
☐ other

2. Fax sheet(s) you received:

- ☐ Tuberculosis (TB): General Information  
☐ TB Infection vs. TB Disease  
☐ Diagnosis of TB Infection (Tuberculin Skin Test) and TB Disease  
☐ Treatment of TB Infection (Preventive Therapy)  
☐ Treatment of TB Disease  
☐ Management of Persons Exposed to Multidrug-Resistant TB  
☐ BCG Vaccine  
☐ Infection Control  
☐ Screening for TB  
☐ TB Morbidity in the United States  
☐ Tuberculosis Educational Materials Order Form

3. Reason you requested fax sheet:

- ☐ for general information on topic  
☐ to answer specific question

If you had a specific question, please describe it:

4. The information met your needs.

- ☐ yes  
☐ no  
☐ partially

If you answered no or partially, please describe your unmet needs:

5. Suggestions for additional information sheets or for improving the system: